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December 17, 2007

The Honorable Michael Mukasey
Attorney General of the United States
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Mr. Attorney General:

I am writing to follow up on communications by my staff to the Department regarding the Judiciary Committee's hearing this Thursday on the "Applicability of Federal Criminal Laws to the Interrogation of Detainees." The Committee has requested orally to the Office of Legislative Affairs that the Department provide an official to testify at this hearing. Our interest in hearing from a Department official is more urgent in the wake of your December 13th response to the Committee's December 7th letter requesting information pertaining to the destruction of the CIA videotapes showing interrogations of detainees. In that December 13th letter, you refused to provide our Committee with any of the requested information, other than a statement that an investigation is pending. Letters to other congressional committees similarly declined to provide information and asked that congressional investigations be delayed for an indefinite period of time. The Department has also resisted judicial inquiry into these issues.

As you well know, this Committee has jurisdiction over the Department and an obligation to perform meaningful oversight of the Department's activities, and other committees have oversight responsibilities concerning the CIA. We also note that congressional precedent dictates that parallel congressional and executive investigations occur frequently, and therefore should not be used as a shield against proper and necessary oversight. In light of the importance of the issues surrounding the Department's investigation into the destruction of the CIA tapes, we expect that the Department will provide a high level official to testify on this subject matter, specifically including the Department's attempts to forestall legislative or judicial inquiry.

The Honorable Michael Mukasey
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Sincerely,


John Conyers, Jr.
Chairman

cc: Hon. Lamar S. Smith
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Hon. Robert C. Scott
Hon. William Delahunt
Hon. Trent Franks
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